

If you go down to the woods today... you could be in for a BIG surprise!!

Spring Bank Holiday, and what could be nicer than a picnic in the forest, a walk on land areas across the country. What you may not have bargained for are some of the other inhabitants – like ticks!

picnic in the forest, a walk on land areas across the country. other inhabitants – like ticks!

In parts of the UK up to 7% of ticks carry Lyme disease because its symptoms can be mistaken for flu or skin problems. Around 250-300 people are diagnosed with Lyme disease each year in the UK.

ease, which is difficult to diagnose in allergies. Around 250-300 the UK.



The sheep tick, *Ixodes ricinus*, feeds on human and animal blood and takes several days to complete its meal.

Sheep ticks are found throughout Britain and Europe and are able to run free.

They bite humans just as readily as animals, although children and dogs are more likely to pick them up than adults.

If your family goes to a wild place where ticks could live, take simple precautions to stop them reaching your skin:

take simple precautions to stop them reaching your skin:

1. Cover up – no bare legs or feet.
2. Tuck trousers into socks or wear insect repellent
3. Check everyone's skin folds and on the scalp after a day's outing to make sure they haven't picked up any unwanted visitors.

In other parts of Europe or in the USA there are other ticks that can carry different diseases. It's amazing how many ticks are brought back to the UK by tourists who only discover big ticks like this "Lone Star" tick around 10 days after picking them up.

other ticks that can carry different diseases. It's amazing how many ticks are brought back to the UK by tourists who only discover big ticks like this "Lone Star" tick around 10 days after picking them up.



The "Lone Star" tick, *Amblyomma americanum*, can carry Rocky Mountain spotted fever, a severe bacterial disease from southern USA.

Fortunately most ticks do not carry diseases but they are a very real risk if you are bitten, so it's better to prevent them from biting in the first place.

they are a very real risk if you are bitten, so it's better to prevent them from biting in the first place.